The great advantage offered by this brigade is its readiness at all periods for the public service, its obedience, and the confidence which each pompier has in his comrade. Here the eagerness of individuals often leads to daring which terminates only in the destruction of the courageous individual who rushes blindly into danger. There should be always ladders of escape in the hands of proper persons, and by the joining together on the spot a sufficient number of iron ladders, one of sufficient height to meet an emergency could easily be formed. We see an apparatus occasionally paraded in the streets, but we have heard that it is never near the spot which requires its use. Some years since, Aldini, the friend and coadjutor of the immortal Galvani, the discoverer of the power which is now performing such marvellous agency, delivered a lecture at the Royal Institution on the subject of preservation against fire, and exhibited a uniform mostly composed of asbestos, and a mask for the protection of the system against the effects of smoke. His experiments were perfectly successful, his apparatus was evidently well adapted to the uses for which it was proposed, his explanations were received with great approbation, and it was considered that any hints dropped from a man whose reputation was so firmly established, would be joyfully hailed and acted upon; still, however, no steps have been taken, and the devastation committed by fire in London is a blot upon the civilization of the country, shews the disregard of the means placed in our hands for our protection, and that that which is everybody's business is indeed nobody's.

The only care the legislature has taken is to be found in the provisions of the Building Act, by which the duties of the churchwardens are, to have keys to open the water-pipes, and plugs fixed at proper distances, and to have three fire-engines. The force under the superintendent, as established in 1833 by the different fire-offices, has ten engineers, nine sub-engineers, thirty-one senior firemen, and forty-one junior firemen, who are clothed, have an apparatus, and are an organized force capable of doing much good; but when we learn that five hundred fires in the year are not unusual, and that thirteen or fourteen lives are lost, we think that enough is not done, and that an inquest ought to be held after every fire.

DR. KUGLER'S LECTURES ON ARCHITECTURE.

The Germans have views and perception of art differing from ours, and in some respects superior to us. We are the mechanics, the great builders and operators, while they occupy the province of design and deal with the more abstract essences of beauty—a combination of the two would benefit both, and to this both are fast proceeding. A few remarks from our excellent contemporary, the *Athenæum*, in treating on Dr. Kugler's Lectures on Church Architecture delivered in Berlin, may serve to usher in and sustain what we have ourselves to propound—and for the present we merely quote to call attention to the subject:—

"There are, says Dr. Kugler, two distinct theories as to architecture; one of which regards all that distant ages and countries have produced as wholly foreign and inapplicable to the tastes and wants of the present age, and seeks to create something perfectly new and original; the other pays implicit obedience to the laws established by antiquity, and maintains that the powers of the artist will always find sufficient scope and exercise in the application of those laws. The followers of this system either choose some particular style—as the Greek—to which they inflexibly adhere; or they copy different styles according to the character and distinction of the building they have to execute; as, for example, a theatre in the Grecian, a church in the Gothic, and so on. The adherent of this system is, however, constantly met by the conditions of time and place, by which all architecture is limited; and consequently can very rarely succeed in rendering his imitation pure.

"There is, adds Professor Kugler, a third system. This recognizes certain elementary and necessary laws, which lie at the bottom of all architecture, and have an internal and indestructible life and force, however various the forms under which they develope themselves. The object of the adherent of this system is, to discover and to master this necessary and natural element, and to separate it from all the local and historical peculiarities with which it is found combined. To one imbued with this view of the subject, there is no style of architecture, however rude or fantastic, which may not suggest useful and applicable ideas. Instead of servilely imitating particular models, he will endeavour to work out these fundamental elements according to the bent of his own genius and the conditions by which he is restrained. He will thus have secured a firm basis of laws and principles, without the fear of becoming a mere copier. Dr. Kugler proceeds to apply this last theory to Church Architecture:—

* * * * *

"The Gothic style, he says, lasted only a few centuries. The age of the revival of science destroyed its sway; it destroyed not only that which, as to form, may be called the peculiar expression of the taste of the middle ages, but also the entire law, according to which a completely symmetrical and significant architectonic whole had risen into existence. The fantastic element, which was inherent in the Gothic style, had sometimes been pushed to extravagance; and the world, surfeited of it, now demanded simplicity and clearness. It found them in the works of classical antiquity, to which the literary tendencies of the age also inclined. Men tried to re-introduce the antique; they created a learned architecture. But the classical forms seldom corresponded to the conditions of church architecture. The works of this time are mere returns to the arched basilica, either in the Roman or the properly so called Byzantine style; with the architrave and frieze prescribed by the classical rules, and with more or less of decoration. They were bastard productions, like those of ancient Roman art. St. Peter's at Rome is the great type of this modern ecclesiastical architecture; it doubtless imposes by the vastness of its dimensions and the grandeur of its proportions: but in no degree by a conformation inspired with life and harmonious meaning. In this state has church architecture remained for centuries, with unimportant variations; such, for example, as the tasteless and unmeaning scrolls and flourishes of the former half of the last century, which only deserve notice as an indication of a decided demand for more richness and variety of form, which this style was a tasteless and grotesque endeavour to satisfy."

COUNTRY BILLS AND COUNTRY BUILDERS.

A "Well-wisher to The Builder and a West Countryman," writes us a letter in explanation of the word "boitel," which was introduced in an article headed "Country Bills and Country Builders." He, like another correspondent, finds fault with the tone adopted in that article to that highly respected and respectable body, the country builders, and so should we if we thought there was any thing serious in the intention of the writer; but we think the sting was fairly withdrawn, or the meaning and motive made clear, in the concluding paragraph, where ample justice was done to that deserving body of men. The country builders rank among the pride of the British yeomanry—we now particularly allude to builders living in country and rural districts, careful and thrifty, yet open-hearted, generous, and hospitable; we know them well, and have enjoyed in our happiest days the unfeigned welcome of their unpretending, but well-appointed homes. Our friends may depend upon our not being found ranked with the enemies of the country builders; it would be ingratitude to a class, and ingratitude to principles as dear to us as the class. However, to the meaning of the word "boitel."

"A West Countryman" questions the authenticity of the blacksmith's bill. The words "To stealing a boitel," which were translated in the article alluded to "To steeling a wedge," "instead," says he, "of raising a laugh at the poor blacksmith's expense, recoil upon the narrator of the anecdote, boitel being only a misnomer for beetle, a heavy mallet that drives a wedge, and never requires 'stealing,' having merely an iron hoop at either end, to prevent its splitting."

We have thus given the sum of the explanation, and cut out the acrimonious matter which the article had provoked. We cannot watch every word that creeps into our columns, nor prevent occasional sparring, but we would beg to remind our friends that they may spare us some trouble if each will consider himself surety, as far as he is himself concerned, for the good behaviour and good conduct of The Builder!

HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT.

The following statement, which has been abstracted from a parliamentary return made in February last, contains matter of interest to our readers, connected as it is with the great national work of the building of the New Houses of Parliament.

Total amount voted in sessions 1835 to 1842, both inclusive	£438,500	0	0
Amount unexpended to February last, required for works now in progress of completion	58,016	10	0
	380,483	10	0
Details of above expenditure:—			
Purchase of property in Abingdon-street and the vicinity, &c.	90,605	6	6
For the river wall, &c.	55,902	3	2
For the general building ..	233,976	0	4
	380,483	10	0
Estimate of the further sums that will be required to complete the buildings	578,424	12	9
Details of the above estimate:—			
Mr. Barry's original estimate for the building ..	707,104	0	0
Additions to the above estimate:—			
For extra foundations, in consequence of quicksands and springs, and for strengthening the foundation of the Victoria and other towers	35,063	3	1
Probable excess of cost by the use, for the whole of the exterior, of the hardest and most expensive of the stones selected for this building	22,000	0	0
For rendering the building fire-proof	21,000	0	0
For warming and ventilating the building, including the cost of the proposed central ventilating tower required by Dr. Reid to carry his system into effect	65,000	0	0
For providing additional accommodation for attorneys, as recommended by the Law Society	5,000	0	0
For providing an official residence for the librarian of the House of Commons	1,250	0	0
Ditto for the Clerk of the House of Commons	2,000	0	0
Contingencies — probable amount	12,000	0	0
Expense incurred in building the river wall, including the coffer-dam	55,902	3	1
For purchase of premises and various miscellaneous expenses	90,605	6	6
Total amount of Mr. Barry's estimates for the general building, and also of the actual expenditure for building the river wall; for the purchase of premises required to form a site for the New Houses of Parliament, and for miscellaneous services relating to the same	1,016,924	12	0
Amount already voted	438,500	0	0
Estimated amount of the future votes of Parliament that will be required in the present and subsequent sessions to complete the buildings.....	578,424	12	9

In addition to what is above stated, a further expenditure will be required for completing the landing-places from the river Thames, connected with the new Houses of Parliament; for making good the pavings, &c.,

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